



State of Connecticut

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Testimony of State Senate Minority Leader John McKinney
Human Services Public Hearing
Thursday, March 6, 2014
11:00 AM in Room 2A of the LOB

Thank you Chairwoman Slossberg, Chairwoman Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, for the opportunity to testify today on **Proposed H.B. No. 5446 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OR ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES.**

The occurrence of double child care subsidy payments was brought to my attention by a concerned Department of Children and Families (DCF) employee. After much investigation, it has been verified that current practice by the DCF and the Department of Social Services (DSS) results in the state paying twice for child care services provided to Connecticut foster children.

To incentivize foster care, the state provides daycare cost assistance. Foster families are asked to apply to the DSS for participation in the Care 4 Kids program. In order to ensure that the family receives assistance, DCF pays for child care expenses while the foster parent's application is pending at DSS. While it is DSS's goal to have all applications approved within 30 days, it can apparently take months to get an application approved if all necessary information is not provided in this initial application.

Pursuant to the Care 4 Kids regulations, once an application is approved payment retroactive to the date of application is provided by the state. While this is obviously a necessity for those families that rely on this assistance, foster families have already had their child care expenses paid by DCF for that period of time. Since payment under Care 4 Kids is made directly to the provider the State of Connecticut is at the mercy of each individual provider to determine whether or not the double payment is returned. Unfortunately according to the concerned taxpayer that brought this to my attention, the return of the double payment is not frequently made.

The current Care 4 Kids application form already distinguishes foster care applicants. Therefore I cannot imagine that it would be overly burdensome for DSS to provide Care 4 Kids assistance for that population effective on the date that the application is approved by their office rather than when it was received.

Eliminating this double payment will not result in a child not receiving needed child care nor will it impact Connecticut foster families, it is hopefully something really simple that we can do to ensure the best use of state resources. I thank you for bringing this bill before your committee and I urge your support of this bill.